

MINUTES OF THE STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, December 6, 2018
Room 308; State Archives/Library Building
109 E. Jones St., Raleigh NC

10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Attending: Sarah Koonts, Kevin Cherry, Andrea Gabriel, Tammy Beasley, Sharon Davis, Jim Martin, Drew Reisinger, Erin Lawrimore, Christine Botta

Call to Order

I. Welcome

The SHRAB meeting was called to order, and Sarah Koonts welcomed new and returning members. Each board member introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background:

- Sarah Koonts is the State Archivist for North Carolina. She also is the Deputy Coordinator of the SHRAB.
- Kevin Cherry is the State Coordinator for SHRAB, and the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives and History
- Drew Reisinger is the Register of Deeds for Buncombe County.
- Tammy Beasley is the Register of Deeds for New Hanover County.
- Christine Botta is the Administrative Secretary for the State Archives.
- Jim Martin is a professor of history at Campbell University.
- Sharon Davis is the Register of Deeds for Durham County.
- Erin Lawrimore is the University Archivist at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Andrea Gabriel works in outreach and development for the State Archives.

Sarah provided an overview of the NC SHRAB, including its statutory foundation, relationship with the National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and previous activities undertaken by the NC SHRAB. The group discussed funding from NHPRC. They also discussed the possibility of block funding from NARA and NHPRC to states for archival activities. Sarah and Kevin explained that perhaps around the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding may be an opportunity to lobby Congress for this type of funding. Kevin also highlighted the support of members of North Carolina's Congressional delegation for NARA and NHPRC. This includes long-standing support from Representative David Price and Representative Mark Meadows. Currently Representative Meadows is the House of Representative's delegate to NHPRC.

II. SHRAB Business **Review of Minutes**

Sarah asked for comments on the minutes from the March 17, 2017 meeting. Drew identified a misspelling on page 5. With that correction noted, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Reimbursement logistics

Sarah then called on Christine to review some department reimbursement documentation. Christine reviewed the reimbursement documents with board members and collected signed documents. Christine agreed to meet the members outside at the parking lot to collect receipts for parking. Those members compensated by their counties for this meeting and travel would not be reimbursed by SHRAB.

III. Report of the State Coordinator/Deputy Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Kevin Cherry

Kevin began his report by detailing the program areas that operate under the umbrella of the Office of Archives and History. It is the most comprehensive state based public history agency under one department. He commented that the national trend for visitation at museums and historic sites is declining. However, our sites and museums are bucking that trend. We experienced record high visitation in 2017, along with a record high number of volunteer hours. Visitation is down in 2018, but that is due to the impact of the recent hurricanes.

Next Kevin highlighted some work throughout the Office of Archives and History. The colonial and Governor's papers projects have been moved online. A comprehensive book about shipbuilding work in North Carolina will be completed soon. The 300th anniversary for Blackbeard's death culminated with events held during East Carolina University's homecoming. The American Indian Heritage Celebration is a thriving, annual event held each November at the Museum of History. The African American Cultural Celebration is coming up in January. Tryon Palace recently had a festival and symposium on JonKunnu in North Carolina. \$400,000 has been raised to save land near Alamance Battlefield. The reconstruction of Fort Dobbs is progressing as planned. Historic Bath is in the second phase of their exhibit development project. The North Carolina Civil War and Reconstruction Center will break ground soon in Fayetteville. \$27 million of the \$60 million required to complete that project has already been raised. This will be the first center of its kind that includes the interpretation of Reconstruction, along with the Civil War. The Transportation Museum had a record-breaking year for their annual "Polar Express" event. 53,000 tickets were sold for 21 nights of shows with 7 trains running a night. Three times more tax credit projects for historic structures were reviewed by Historic Preservation this year. The department will try to get special funding for districts hit by the recent hurricanes. A recent symposium about WWI on the Outer Banks was covered by C-SPAN. The African American Heritage Commission is working on interpretation about the 7 ports for slave disembarkation in North Carolina. They also are mapping the 320 plus sites from the Green Book in North Carolina. Finally, the hurricane heavily impacted 8 sites in the Office of Archives and History.

Kevin ended his report by noting that the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources has 38 support groups. The board asked questions about the number of departmental

employees. There are more than 3,000 full time and over 700 part-time and seasonal employees. Much of the funding for major operations comes from receipts, such as the “Polar Express” event, ticket sales, and the Archives and Records Management (ARM) fund. State appropriations provide some salaries, utilities, and supplies, and the department raises funds for most programmatic work. The Archives has 23 of 69 positions and all discretionary spending on the ARM fund. The Transportation Museum, for example, raises 92% of its budget from receipts.

IV. Report of the Deputy State Coordinator/State Archivist, Director of the Division of Archives and Records, Sarah Koonts

Sarah provided some brief highlights of accomplishments and upcoming projects for the State Archives. She started by covering the implementation of a new database to manage all collections holdings activities, including the public catalog and finding aids. Due to the nature of the legacy data fed into this database, we are doing extensive clean up before launching the public facing piece of this tool.

The division recently created two new positions, an oral historian and a social media/online education coordinator. The oral historian will focus first on the “She Changed the World” programming that will celebrate 100 years of suffrage for women. We anticipate the collection of oral histories from female leaders in the state.

Sarah gave an overview of what the division does for emergency response for public records. The recent hurricanes showed the vulnerabilities of the smaller municipalities in protecting their records. Kevin added details about the departmental responsibilities post-disaster. He also noted that the Governor’s budget request may include funding for an additional records analyst in the eastern portion of the state to work with these smaller municipalities on protection of their essential records.

Sarah reported on some commemorations, exhibits and partnerships undertaken by the Archives. This includes the traveling version of the “Treasures of Carolina: Stories from the State Archives” exhibit grant that originally was at the Museum of History. It is finishing a run at the Mountain Gateway Museum and moving soon to Fayetteville. It will be at the Museum of the Albemarle last. She also discussed various pop-up exhibits and partnerships with teaching organizations.

The “People Not Property” grant awarded to UNC Greensboro includes participation by the State Archives. This grant aims to index bills of sale involving enslaved individuals, digitize the documents, and provide for crowdsourced transcriptions of them. Sarah also highlighted other division grants, including the TOMES grant for email capture and preservation, and the anticipated partnership with UNC Chapel Hill and the School of Information and Library Science for continued work on email preservation and access work.

Sarah noted that she had been going to cover a recent application to NHPRC for a grant to digitize and make available some early legal records in NC. This is for a new grant

program at NHPRC. However, since Commission staff asked for volunteer reviewers for this program, she did not provide additional details about the NC application. Drew, Jim, and Erin agreed they were able to review grants. Sarah will provide their names to the Commission staff.

The Archives continues to take in great collections, including the final print and photo shoot images from the News & Observer. As they moved to a new facility, they did not have room for these files. Drew highlighted the similar situation with the Asheville Citizen Times and their files. The Archives also acquires records of defunct post-secondary schools and then references those transcripts for students.

The group discussed the budget picture for the Archives, including the trend toward lower revenue collections in the ARM fund, particularly after the recent hurricanes. In response to a question, Sarah noted that around \$1.7 million is collected in this fund annually. Kevin said that reserves provide about a five-year cushion to operate in the red until we can find a solution to this problem.

Finally, Sarah provided information on upcoming activities, including the “She Changed the World” programming, traveling exhibits, crowdsourcing transcription projects, and the development of a local functional schedule. The “She Changed the World” activities launch in March of 2019. Erin offered some idea of resources at UNC Greensboro that may be of use for the suffrage activities.

V. Grant reports, Andrea Gabriel

Since we have 3 new board members, Andrea gave an update of the most recently completed grant, Teaching Digital North Carolina (TDNC), and the current grant, Digitizing North Carolina’s Hidden Collections. With help from some SHRAB members, about 300,000 collections from the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) were mined for primary sources used in creating lesson plans and tutorials for students and teachers around the topics of civil rights, business and industry, and WWI. The three lesson plans can be found on the redesigned SRHAB website—the redesign was part of the grant. TDNC saved a great deal of money because the approach was to look at materials that were already digitized rather than visiting institutions and selecting items to digitize. Kevin noted that the lesson plans from this grant will be used in the ANCHOR resource. This is an online set of curriculum resources for teaching North Carolina history.

The current grant, Digitizing North Carolina’s Hidden collections, identifies smaller repositories across the state who want some part of their collections digitized. Applications were solicited and out of 22 received, 20 participants were selected to join this program. One requirement of inclusion was that staff of the institutions would be required to attend a workshop on preparing their materials for scanning. Four workshops were held and the last one was finished December 3, 2018. Working with UNC’s Digital Heritage Center, who will digitize the records, we will transport records back and forth to Chapel Hill. Some of the trips planned for records pick up were unnecessary because

workshop attendees brought their collections to the workshops. This has saved travel and expenses Hidden Collections was highlighted in an NHPRC-Council of State Archivists webinar and cited as a model for cooperation and partnership.

VI. SHRAB connections

To kick off a discussion of potential activities for the next grant application, Sarah said that she thought it would be worthwhile to have a discussion of what activities were going on around the state in support of cultural institutions and documentary heritage. Andrea has been involved with the North Carolina Community College Archivists Association (NCCAA) to promote the Traveling Archivist Program (TAP) and to determine how to share resources and information. Erin Lawrinmore works with this group too and mentioned that there is only one trained archivist in the entire community college system. Erin and UNC Greensboro have a one-year LSTA grant to survey repositories about what type of training repositories need and the best way to deliver training to them. Erin stated that preliminary survey results show that they want short online training modules as opposed to day-long trainings or workshops. Many are concerned that unless they can perform archival work well, they shouldn't start any activities. Andrea has been taking with Erin about the survey and preliminary results. The hope is that by June there would be a structure or outline for what types of mini-modules would be most needed. One or two may also be developed by then, too. There is no set audience for this other than smaller institutions with archival materials. Another need that may be highlighted is a space for online finding aids.

The group discussed what is known about the needs of the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies. Erin included their mailing list in the survey discussed previously. The group also discussed other groups focusing on local history. UNC Chapel Hill has a backpack archivist program, but those resources are not being distributed in the state yet. IMLS has a new grant program focused on small and rural areas. Community history is one subcategory for that grant program.

The discussion moved to areas where collections may be in need of extra care or attention. Would there be a need to do training with the NC Association of Registers of Deeds about the use of their preservation fund? Sarah suggested that this could be done with her analysts. They would be happy to help with any regional training workshops as needed. Types of records, such as surveyor's records, or topics for a workshop, such as disaster response, were explored. The role of the TAP program in support of activities and training was also discussed.

VII. Next grant cycle ideas

Grants to consider are a regular SHRAB programming grant, which are the typical grants we manage and an Archives Collaboration Planning Grant, which involves at least three partners. The collaboration grant involves two steps: planning and implementation grant. The implementation grant would follow the planning grant, but a planning grant wouldn't guarantee an implementation grant.

A suggestion was made to continue the current grant, that is, digitizing hidden collections using the same model as the current grant. Andrea is not sure how NHPRC would feel about doing the same program over again. Drew wanted more information on program grants. Erin asked when these new grants would be active, and Sarah explained the application was due the summer of 2019 and the money would be available 2020.

Kevin suggested a partnership with SHRAB, registers of deeds, and the NC School of Government to collaborate on a program that would provide training and support for the preservation of local records. Training topics would focus on government records which would be a one-day training, or a workshop attached to a meeting. Kevin also suggested small newspapers or small repositories as potential focus areas.

Sarah emphasized that SHRAB's mission was to work on projects that protected records. There was some discussion about a project that might help train ROD to digitize records; smaller counties might have to tap into a larger portal to host their records. Sarah stated that our own government records analysts can help registers of deeds at any time, with training and best practices. Other topics of records: commissioner's meeting minutes and Tammy also asked if anyone was involved with the North Carolina Society of Surveyors. Did we know if their records were in need of attention or support?

Another grant idea is to expand TAP visits, maybe to two days and provide more hands-on assistance to archivists in the field. Erin said that this may be data coming from the survey, the need for a follow up TAP visit or a longer visit. Erin suggested to create short training videos to help further the work started in their LSTA grant.

Lunch break

After lunch, Sarah suggested that we explore the idea of working with an expanded view of the TAP with some other elements. Erin suggested a two-day TAP visit and informed by their LSTA grant survey, select some topics to create training modules. Andrea suggested that we might be able to select some TAP success stories and create videos about how the program helped their users and communities—how records are being accessed and used.

Andrea will put together some ideas about how SHRAB and UNC-G can collaborate on the next grant project. UNC-Digital Heritage Center may be able to collaborate as well.

VIII. Other business

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned a little after 1:00 p.m.